

Adult Learning and Leadership Diversity in Teaching and Learning Initiative

Dr. Victoria Marsick and Stacey Robbins

The Adult Learning and Leadership (ALL) program aims to foster transformative learning by helping students surface and challenge their assumptions in order to lead and change themselves and their organizations and communities. Over the past two and half years, a steering committee of ALL faculty, staff and students have been working to improve the ALL program such that it better meets student need and aligns with objectives necessary for success in the 21st century. Based on data from interviews and focus groups with current and former students, one area in which the ALL program could improve is in the representation of diverse viewpoints across the curriculum. Although students cited the diversity of students with regard to experience level, culture and practice area as a strength of the program, this diversity was not necessarily present across the curriculum nor engaged in a meaningful way.

The ALL program is committed to a globally oriented curriculum that represents the complex global world in which we live. To this aim, we have created a list of 21st Century Competencies that we are committed to fostering in our students. Among these are cultural responsiveness, self-awareness and self-regulation, reflective practice and transformative learning, key capacities that the proposed project will work to enhance in both faculty and students. Previous projects that were part of this initiative include:

- Dean's Fellowship for Teaching and Diversity (2012-2013) to better understand how the ALL doctoral cohort program (AEGIS) integrates awareness of diversity issues into its curriculum and pedagogical practice
- Dean's Fellowship for Teaching and Diversity (2013-2014) that used Design Thinking with a group of faculty, staff and students to engage the question, "How might we better engage diversity in the ALL program?"

The proposed project is consistent the ALL program mission and derived from learnings leveraged from the aforementioned work of the department. As a current ALL student noted, "diversity must be incorporated into the conversation . . . as a critical component of the learning competencies for graduates" (Liu Wong & Yorks, 2014, p. 24); however, in order to do this we must better prepare both faculty and students. The aims of this project then, are as follows:

- Develop workshop series for faculty and adjuncts to better engage culturally responsive teaching and facilitation and develop a globally oriented curriculum
- Develop workshop series for students to better engage diversity in their teaching and learning in a global context
- Develop online resources that can be used flexibly by both faculty (core and adjunct) and students to engage diversity

The tables below outline the products, timeline and budget for this initiative:

Date	Product
June 2014	Data gathering: Appreciative Inquiry of best practices and surfacing of issues/concerns
July 2014	Begin Literature Review: Best Practices in Diversity in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
August 2014	Workshop materials and agenda designed for: -Faculty (core and adjuncts) workshops (2) -Student Workshops (2) Begin Development of online materials
<i>Sept-Dec 2014</i>	<i>Faculty Workshops (2)</i> <i>Student Workshop: Nov 2014</i> <i>Data collection ongoing</i>
<i>Jan-May 2015</i>	<i>Student Workshop: Feb 2014</i> <i>Data collection ongoing</i> <i>Present findings to ALL/TC Community: May 2014</i>
<i>Summer 2015</i>	<i>Present findings at conference</i>

The data gathering will be done using an appreciative inquiry process with faculty (core and adjunct) and students. Appreciative Inquiry “suggests that we look for what works . . . [the] result of the inquiry process is a series of statements that describe where the organization wants to be, based on the high moments of where they have been” (Hammond, 1998, 6-7).

Data will be gathered via survey and will be coded and analyzed for themes. Findings from the survey will be shared with the ALL community through the project page on the ALL website as well as our Facebook group. These findings will be used in conjunction with a literature review of best practices in diversity in teaching and learning in higher education to develop faculty and student workshops.

Based on work done in previous initiatives, workshops are likely to include the following topic areas: awareness of different kinds of diversity; awareness of microaggressions; different cultural responses to teaching practices; facilitating difficult conversations; creating a global educator narrative; globally oriented curriculum development; and inclusive teaching practices, such as small group inquiry, use of Critical Incident Questionnaires (CIQ), dialogue, framing conflict as opportunity, ongoing critical reflection, collaborative inquiry, presentational knowing and flipped classroom pedagogy.

Data will be gathered throughout the process and collated with previous efforts, which will be presented to the ALL community throughout the project after the workshops have been executed. Finally, we intend to share the findings of this work with the larger TC and higher education communities through conference presentations and/or publications.

References

Hammond, S. (1998). *The thin book of appreciative inquiry*. Thin Book Publishing Company.

Liu Wong, M. & Yorks, L. (2014). *Examining the AEGIS program: Integrating diversity into teaching and learning*.